



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on New Kazakh Electoral Law

As delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative Douglas Davidson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 25, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The U.S. Government has consistently urged the Government of Kazakhstan to pass new election legislation that fully meets OSCE commitments and international standards.

The United States notes that after a lengthy and lively public debate over the new law, it was passed by both houses of Parliament on March 15 in an unprecedented third reading.

Initial indications suggest that, although the new law contains a number of improvements over existing legislation, it nonetheless falls short of OSCE commitments in several key respects.

To date, however, the OSCE has been unable to obtain a copy of the new law for analysis by ODIHR in Warsaw. We understand that the new law already may have been passed to the President, who has 15 days in which to take action upon it..

Although the law has not yet been signed by the President, we urge that the Government of Kazakhstan deliver a copy of the text to the OSCE for analysis by ODIHR as soon as possible. Only after receiving ODIHR's professional analysis will the United States be in a position fully to assess the new law.

The United States reserves the right to return to this issue at a later date.

Thank you.